

Code Name Verity by Elizabeth Wein- Females in combat (article 1 of 2)

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Works Cited

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Section:

SECURITY

SECRET WEAPONS

NAVY SEAL 'MARK OWEN' REVEALED THAT THE INTELLIGENCE ANALYST WHO LED HIS TEAM TO OSAMA WAS A WOMAN-AND THERE ARE PLENTY MORE LIKE HER. THE SUPERSMART TARGETERS OF THE CIA.

THE NEW unauthorized, firsthand account of the Navy SEAL operation that killed Osama bin Laden makes clear that the mission's success relied in large part on a CIA analyst named in the book as "Jen." In an intelligence profession known for uncertainty, Jen -- who had been tracking bin Laden's location for years -- assured the SEALs she had no doubt that he resided in a walled compound less than a half a mile from Pakistan's military academy in Abbottabad. Before the raid, she briefed the SEALs on what they should expect to encounter in Abbottabad -- down to details like whether a door inside the compound would open inwardly or outwardly. (She got it right.)

Jen is a new kind of CIA officer: smart, self-assured -- and female. It wasn't always like this. In its early years, the agency kept women away from the challenging work of espionage. Often employees with two X chromosomes were relegated to the steno pool, or midlevel analysis work at best.

Not anymore. Jen is a "targeter," an analyst who pores over grainy drone footage and sorts through phone intercepts and other fragments of intelligence to find the exact location of terrorists, drug traffickers, or arms dealers. Since Sept. 11, the CIA has come under heavy, and often negative, political scrutiny. But during this same period, the agency has quietly perfected the art and science of the modern manhunt by training a generation of targeters like Jen. As opposed to the area specialists who analyze a country's government or economy, the targeters (sometimes called "targeteers") almost always focus on one person or one group. They work in the same units as the case officers and special forces teams that act on their analysis. And in recent years,

according to Jose Rodriguez, a former deputy director of operations at the CIA, the majority of targeters have been women.

Indeed, the CIA's first unit devoted to tracking al Qaeda, known as Alec Station, hired women analysts almost exclusively in the 1990s. Mike Scheuer, the first chief of Alec Station, says that when he left the post in 1999, all of his 14 targeters were women. He also says the first captures of senior al Qaeda leaders after Sept. 11 were the result of investigative work done by these women. "If I could have put out a sign on the door that said 'No men need apply' I would have done it," he says.

One of the most famous targeters in recent history was Jennifer Matthews, the head of a CIA team that tracked a senior al Qaeda operational planner known as Abu Zubaydah to a safe house in Faisalabad, Pakistan, according to Joby Warrick's book *The Triple Agent*. In the book, Warrick captures the hard choices a top-flight intelligence officer has to make to balance spy work and family. While serving in the CIA's station in Khost, Afghanistan, Matthews spent Christmas Day in 2009 with her children back in Fredericksburg, Va., through a Skype video chat. After her children opened their presents, her son and youngest child asked, "Mommy, can you show us your gun?" according to Warrick's account. She showed him her pistol and rifle. Then she was off to the mess hall on the base for a Christmas meal with her fellow officers. Five days later, Matthews was killed when a Jordanian physician she thought was a spy for the CIA blew himself up at a meeting with her at the Khost station. "She was among the best," says Rodriguez.

Like Matthews, Gina Bennett -- a senior CIA analyst who authored one of the agency's first warnings about al Qaeda in 1993 and who later wrote a book called *National Security Mom* -- has sometimes had to participate in family holidays from a remote location. "One of the best Mother's Days I've ever had was when my kids had our traditional chocolate-chip pancakes for Mother's Day breakfast and I attended via a laptop in the dining room," she says. "I could almost smell those pancakes."

Bennett, who is a mother of five, says, "I do not think women, any more than men, have to choose between family and a CIA career anymore." She adds, "Not only has my husband been completely supportive of the fact that my job was a calling for me, but my children have understood the concept of serving the greater good. They do not treat me as if I am making a choice between them and my job. They understand that they are partners in what I do, and they are proud of me. I couldn't do what I do without that."

In early 2009, President Obama asked Bruce Riedel, a longtime CIA officer and counterterrorism expert (and *Newsweek* contributor), to run a review of the war in Afghanistan for the incoming administration. One of the first things he did was travel to CIA headquarters in Langley, Va., to learn about the agency's drone program, which Obama was planning to significantly ramp up. Riedel got a "highly detailed" briefing, he recalls. But what really surprised him was the number of women who were helping to run the covert program. His main briefer was a woman, but so were a significant number of drone targeters who were there that day.

Just before the White House announcement of a new Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy, Obama asked Riedel and his team to come to see him in the Oval Office so he could thank them. Riedel's

team consisted of an Afghan specialist from the State Department and a Pakistan expert from the CIA. Riedel introduced the CIA analyst to Obama as "the best Pakistan expert I've ever seen." Obama looked at the CIA officer, who was sporting stiletto heels, and said with clear amusement, "You don't look like a Pakistan expert."

Mary Margaret Graham, one of the first women to serve in a senior leadership role in the agency's clandestine service -- the side of the CIA dedicated to espionage, sabotage, and paramilitary work as opposed to analysis -- says the targeter career path gives women a chance to do important counterterrorism work and still stay in the Washington area. Valerie Plame, the CIA officer who was outed in 2003 by Bush administration officials in a column by Robert Novak in the midst of the imbroglio over weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, says being a targeter allows CIA women to be closer to the exciting world of ops without the same level of sacrifice to family life. "The job is generally more reliable in terms of hours," she explains.

When asked why more women make it as targeters than men, Graham said, "My opinion is that women tend to give more attention to detail, which is what you need in this line of work." Scheuer agreed: "In the milieu of the directorate of operations, women are far better than men for targeting the terrorist problem," he said. "They pay extraordinary attention to detail. They are very good at drawing connections between towns and people and telephone numbers and credit cards and passports." Asked why so many women succeed as targeters, Bennett joked, "A tenacious woman always gets her guy." (A spokesperson for the CIA, Preston Golson, disputed the notion that women were any better at hunting down terrorists than men. "What makes a good counterterrorism targeting analyst isn't gender-specific," he said. "You have to be creative, patient, tenacious, and persuasive.")

The CIA did not always have a gender-neutral perspective on intelligence work. Take the case of Virginia Hall, the only civilian woman to win a distinguished-service medal in World War II. In that war, Hall served in the predecessor to the CIA, known as the Office of Strategic Services. Disguised as a farmhand, she sneaked into Nazi-occupied France to help train three resistance battalions -- a feat that was all the more impressive considering Hall had a peg leg. CIA official histories say she would pack the leg in a knapsack when she parachuted behind enemy lines. Yet when Hall joined the CIA after the war, she was relegated to a desk job as an analyst far away from the derring-do of espionage.

Indeed, many of the OSS officers who sought to join the CIA after the war found no opportunities to continue their espionage career in the field. Nora Slatkin, a former executive director at the CIA, acknowledged this history in a 1996 speech to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations. "In peacetime, our society somehow felt it could afford the luxury of wasting the talents of women and leaving the Virginia Halls of this world deep in the file drawer," she said.

Jeanne Vertefeuille, a CIA spy catcher who led the team that caught notorious traitor Aldrich Ames in 1994, says the CIA was not a level playing field for women in the early years. Vertefeuille, who joined the agency in 1954, says sometimes the men in the office could cross the line. "If they felt like being grabby, they could get away with it," she recalls. At the time, she adds, "they mainly hired women for clerical work, even if they had law degrees."

In the 1970s, women began to be recruited as spies rather than as analysts and secretaries, but things were still slow to change. Graham, who was hired by the CIA in 1979 after earning a master's degree in Russian studies and working as a nanny for the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, says there were hardly any women in her class when she joined the clandestine service. "When I came in, there were only five women in my class," she recalls. "Within three years there were only two of us left. They left for all the right reasons; they got married and decided to have families." In this period, women would largely be promoted to what Graham calls "pink-collar jobs" -- paperwork positions in human resources or managing the espionage budget. The senior operational positions were still off limits to women.

There were, to be sure, advantages in those early years for women who did become spies. "Nobody ever suspected a woman would be a case officer," one retired female CIA officer recalls. "I was able to get away with a lot back then." Yet the old boys' club atmosphere persisted. Soon after Plame began her first assignment as an undercover-ops officer, the station chief asked to see her, she recently recounted to *Newsweek*. When Plame entered his office, her boss's feet were up on his desk and he was chomping on a cigar. He looked her over and then asked Plame to turn around. She complied. "You'll do," the station chief said, with a smile.

By 1986 some women at the CIA began to fight back. That year, a group of women filed a class-action suit alleging systematic discrimination at the clandestine service. In 1995 the agency settled the lawsuit and agreed to four years of court monitoring of its personnel practices. It also agreed to give \$940,000 in back pay to the aggrieved women. "Things have changed so significantly since that class-action suit," Graham says, adding, "I would hope we never have to go there again, because a court-mandated solution isn't the ideal way to make change."

Today, nearly two decades after the suit was settled, women hold 40 percent of the CIA's senior leadership positions, according to Golson. V. Sue Bromley has been the CIA's third in command since 2011. She was preceded in that post by Stephanie O'Sullivan. And further down the chain of command, analysts like "Jen" are doing the sleuth work that has led to the decimation of al Qaeda's senior leadership.

After the raid that killed bin Laden, the SEALs flew into a U.S. air hangar in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. Jen waited with others as the soldiers delivered the terror leader in a body bag. According to the new book by Mark Owen -- the pseudonym for one of the SEALs who shot bin Laden -- Jen stood on the perimeter of a small circle of U.S. officials eyeing the corpse. Later, Owen writes, on a C-130 cargo plane headed to Kabul, he found Jen huddled in the fetal position, sobbing tears of joy.

In the past, the CIA sought to keep its women from frontline assignments. Now it's trying to keep Jen out of the limelight. Referring to the new book, Golson says it's dangerous to single out any one person from the team of analysts who helped to find bin Laden. "They've never sought attention, and, as we believe the American public would agree, they've earned the right to remain in the shadows," he says. As Jen has proven to her peers, the CIA's women have also earned the right to fight in those shadows.

PHOTO (BLACK & WHITE): WWII spy Virginia Hall, seen here receiving a medal in 1945, worked

undercover in occupied France

PHOTO (COLOR): Jeanne Vertefeuille, below left In center, helped to reveal Aldrich Ames to be a Soviet spy.

PHOTO (COLOR): some of her passports.

PHOTO (BLACK & WHITE): The Abbottabad compound that "Jen" helped uncover as the hiding place of Osama bin Laden.

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By ELI LAKE

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JESSE LENZ

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# Women Under Fire in World War Two

*By Carol Harris*

*Last updated 2011-02-17*



There was much more to women's work during World War Two than 'Make Do and Mend'. They built tanks, worked in rescue teams, and operated behind enemy lines. Carol Harris spoke to women of their experiences during the conflict.

## Signing up

During World War One, women volunteered for essential work in order to release men to go into the armed forces. Some 25 years later, as World War Two loomed, campaigns emphasised the need for women to volunteer in similar fashion. It was always clear, however, that this time volunteering was not going to meet the demands of wartime production, and in 1940, a secret report by Sir William Beveridge demonstrated that the conscription of women, as well as of men, was unavoidable.

...it was emphasised that women would not be required to bear arms.

From spring 1941, every woman in Britain aged 18-60 had to be registered, and their family occupations were recorded. Each was interviewed, and required to choose from a range of jobs, although it was emphasised that women would not be required to bear arms. Many women, however, were eventually to work - and die - under fire.

In December 1941, the National Service Act (no 2) made the conscription of women legal. At first, only single women aged 20-30 were called up, but by mid-1943, almost 90 per cent of single women and 80 per cent of married women were employed in essential work for the war effort.

In 1944, Olive Owens, aged 17, was working as an air raid warden in Croydon, Surrey.

'One day when I was on duty, a V2 rocket dropped on the corner of Park Road and King's Road. It was complete devastation. We dug and dug until our fingers bled. My most vivid memory is of an arm raised, to call for silence, when someone heard tapping among the ruins... '

'The American Red Cross was very good at keeping us in doughnuts and American coffee and I also remember well the astonishment of one American Sergeant when he realised how young I was to be doing that job and working full-time elsewhere too - but it was nothing in those days. Everyone did it.'



## Changing roles

ATS anti-aircraft crew, 1941 © Most women who volunteered before the war went into civil defence or the Women's Land Army. The main civil defence services were Air Raid Precautions (ARP), the fire service and Women's Voluntary Services (WVS). Initially, the women mainly carried out clerical work, but their roles expanded to meet demand, and female pump crews became commonplace.

The WVS was the largest single women's organisation at this time. It was formed to support civil defence and to provide services not provided locally by other organisations, and had over one million members. Typical WVS contributions included organising evacuations, shelters, clothing exchanges and mobile canteens.

Typical WVS contributions included organising evacuations, shelters, clothing exchanges and mobile canteens.

The Women's Land Army/Scottish Land Army was reformed in 1938 so that women could be trained in agricultural work, leaving male workers free to go to war. Most WLA members were young women from the towns and cities. Annice Gibbs, who worked for the WLA Timber Corps, remembers an encounter with Italian prisoners of war (POWs).

'After our training, we soon got used to heavy work, such as lifting pit-props and cutting them into various lengths for the coal mines. There were no mechanical devices used then and every pit-prop was cut by hand.

'... the Italian POWs worked to measure the trees. They were very well looked after and we were amazed to see them erecting field ovens. They cooked bacon and cabbage for their lunch and brewed delicious hot coffee ... and we sat under a tree eating beetroot sandwiches ... We were fortunate - they gave us some of their coffee and food.'

## A woman's place

Ambulance crew, Fulham, 1941 © In the 1930s, social roles were clearly defined. A woman's place was in the home, a man's place was out at work. It was acceptable for women to work outside the home if they had no family to look after, but they were paid less than men were - even when doing the same jobs. Before the war, nearly five million women in the United Kingdom had paid employment, but most would have expected to leave as soon as they married, or when they had their first child.



...so mothers often ran the home alone - and had to get used to going out to work, as well.

With the onset of war, everything changed. Fathers perhaps joined the armed forces, or were sent away to do vital civilian work, so mothers often ran the home alone - and had to get used to going out to work, as well. Young single women, often away from home for the first time, might be billeted miles from their families.

Flexible working hours, nurseries and other arrangements soon became commonplace to accommodate the needs of working women with children. Before long, women made up one third of the total workforce in the metal and chemical industries, as well as in ship-building and vehicle manufacture.

They worked on the railways, canals and on buses. Women built Waterloo Bridge in London. Nellie Brook left the munitions factory where she worked due to poor health, and was assigned to aircraft manufacture.

'I was told my services were needed at A V Roe at Yeardon, where they made Lancaster bombers. That was like something out of science fiction. To get there, we were taken out into the country. When you arrived you would never have thought there was a factory there, it was so well camouflaged; great big grass hillocks and once you went inside it was amazing. No windows, all these hundreds of people of both sexes all working away like ants. All doing different jobs that finished up producing one of Britain's finest planes.'

## Fashion and freedom



Trousers made quite an impact on women's fashion © Military styling and lines influenced fashions at the start of the war. Women often wore trousers, or a one-piece siren suit (so-called because it could be pulled on quickly when an air raid warning siren sounded). Headgear became practical, seen as a means of keeping hair out of the way rather than as a fashion statement. Large handbags - to carry all the family's ration books - were also practical rather than fashionable accessories.

Knitting became a national female obsession. Various schemes gave advice on recycling or making clothes last longer, two of these were the Make Do and Mend, and Sew and Save, schemes. Leading designers worked on the Utility scheme, aiming to make the best use of materials to produce functional clothing.

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Hair was worn long, but off the face. As war drew to a close, women adopted the 'Victory Roll', where the hair was rolled up tightly, fixed in place, and topped with a swept-up curl. Longer hair, like red lipstick, was thought to add to a woman's glamour. The popular wisdom was that such feminine touches boosted morale, both for women and for the men around them.

The practical demands of wartime changed social customs beyond all recognition. People enjoyed far greater social freedom than before, with more opportunities for encounters with



members of the opposite sex, and a sense that normal rules did not apply in the face of so much imminent danger.

The drawback to such new opportunities was the increase in numbers of people with venereal disease, Being, or having an illegitimate child were socially unacceptable then, but even so, there was a huge increase in the number of children born to single mothers during the war. However, increasingly explicit sex education did mean that people ended the war far better informed about this topic than they might have otherwise have been.

## **A global response**

The Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) was formed in 1938. Its initial plan was to recruit 25,000 female volunteers for driving, clerical and general duties. In 1939, however, it was in action in France with the British Expeditionary Force.

Women also came to Britain as members of other Allied forces - such as the Women's Australian Air Force...

The vast majority of women in the ATS served in anti-aircraft command, on searchlights - the 93rd Searchlight Regiment were all female. They also worked in mixed batteries on anti-aircraft guns, but were not officially allowed to fire them.

The Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS) was reformed in the spring of 1939. Women aged 18-50 and living near naval ports could apply. The WRNS maintained ships of the Royal Navy and were involved in some of the most secret planning for D-Day.

Gwyneth Verdon-Roe was in the WRNS in 1943-7. In her letters home, she often mentions her brother and her father, both serving in the Royal Navy. On 15 June 1944 she wrote:

'You mustn't worry. I am keeping an eye on Daddy and Keith. Daddy should be back soon but he is busy keeping the lanes free from mines and making them broader. They are doing a necessary and wonderful job. I read the newspaper reports and keep cuttings. I am so glad I am a plotter - it is the most exciting job because we are in on everything that is happening. The night of 4th-5th June I was on all night. We worked flat out till dawn and then the whole thing was called off because of bad weather. The disappointment was terrible, the anti-climax after all the stress. We were tearful and tired and had never felt so low in all our lives.'

The Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) was created in July 1939. Among other duties, they boosted the numbers in the Royal Observer Corps, and in maintaining and flying barrage balloons.

Some, mainly from the voluntary First Aid Nursing Yeomanry, worked with the Special Operations Executive, dropping into enemy territory and working as saboteurs, couriers and radio operators.

Elsewhere overseas, female nurses in military field hospitals worked near the front line of battle, and many served with allied forces such as SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces). Women also came to Britain as members of other Allied forces - such as the Women's Australian Air Force, and its Canadian and American equivalents. Others came from across the then British Empire to serve in the ATS. At its peak the British auxiliary forces consisted of nearly half a million members.

## Women in 1945

VE Day, London, May 1945 © Recruitment posters showed women as glamorous and independent, and images of women, especially in uniform, were used to sell everything from cigarettes to shoes. In the cinema, women were usually depicted as practical and capable - and those who moaned were usually dead by the end of the film.



"It was an awful and wonderful war. I wouldn't have missed it for anything..."

Women's contributions to the war effort were highlighted in newspapers and magazines, and auxiliary forces paraded regularly through towns. As the war ended, however, printed publications took for granted the return of women to the home.

It was understood throughout the war that what Britain's women were doing was really 'a man's job'. So many of them were dismissed from their work once peace was declared. Government policy encouraged men to return to their pre-war occupations, and wartime nurseries were wound up. In industries that were not heavily unionised, however, some women were kept on - not least because they were cheaper to employ than men.

Trudy Murray served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force. She remembers mixed feelings at the end of the war.

'Demob was a big disappointment to a lot of us. It was an awful and wonderful war. I wouldn't have missed it for anything; some of the friends we made were forever.'

Recognition of the contribution of the auxiliary forces came quickly, after the war was over, with the creation of permanent women's forces in 1949. And post-war food shortages meant that the Women's Land Army continued until 1950. The WVS proved itself too useful ever to disband and continues today, becoming 'Royal' in 1966.

The wartime achievements of civilian women were less easy to define, however, once normal life was resumed, and there was no obvious immediate change in their circumstances. Nevertheless, by the 1960s the experiences of those who had done 'a man's job' in the war years began to resonate with a new generation. Their stories added weight to the campaign throughout that decade for equal workplace opportunities, and equal pay, for women.

## Find out more

### Books

*Green Sleeves: The Story of the WVS/WRVS* by Katharine Bentley Beaman (Seeley, Service and Co, 1977)

*The Story of the W.R.N.S.* by Eileen Bigland (Nicholson and Watson, 1946)

*WWII British Women's Uniforms* by Martin Brayley and Richard Ingram (Windrow and Green, 1995)

*Put That Light Out* by Mike Brown (Sutton, 1999)

*Women in Uniform Through the Centuries* by Elizabeth Ewing (Batsford, 1975)

*Wartime Women - a Mass Observation Anthology* by Dorothy Sheridan (Phoenix Press, 1990)

*Land Girl* by Anne Hall (Ex Libris, 1993)

*The Long Weekend* by Robert Graves and Alan Hodge (Hutchinson, 1985)

### About the author

Carol Harris is a freelance journalist and lecturer, with a special interest in World War Two. She is the author of *Women at War 1939-45: the Home Front*, and *Women at War in Uniform: 1939-45*. She co-authored *The Wartime House* (Sutton, 2000), with Mike Brown, her husband.

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